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BECAUSE OF BEAUTY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

POETRY

HAIL, MAN!

FORWARD, MARCH!

THE HOUR HAS STRUCK

UTTERANCE AND OTHER POEMS

GOD PRAYS

FICTION

THE IMPRISONED SPLENDOR

BECAUSE OF BEAUTY

BY
ANGELA MORGAN



NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1922

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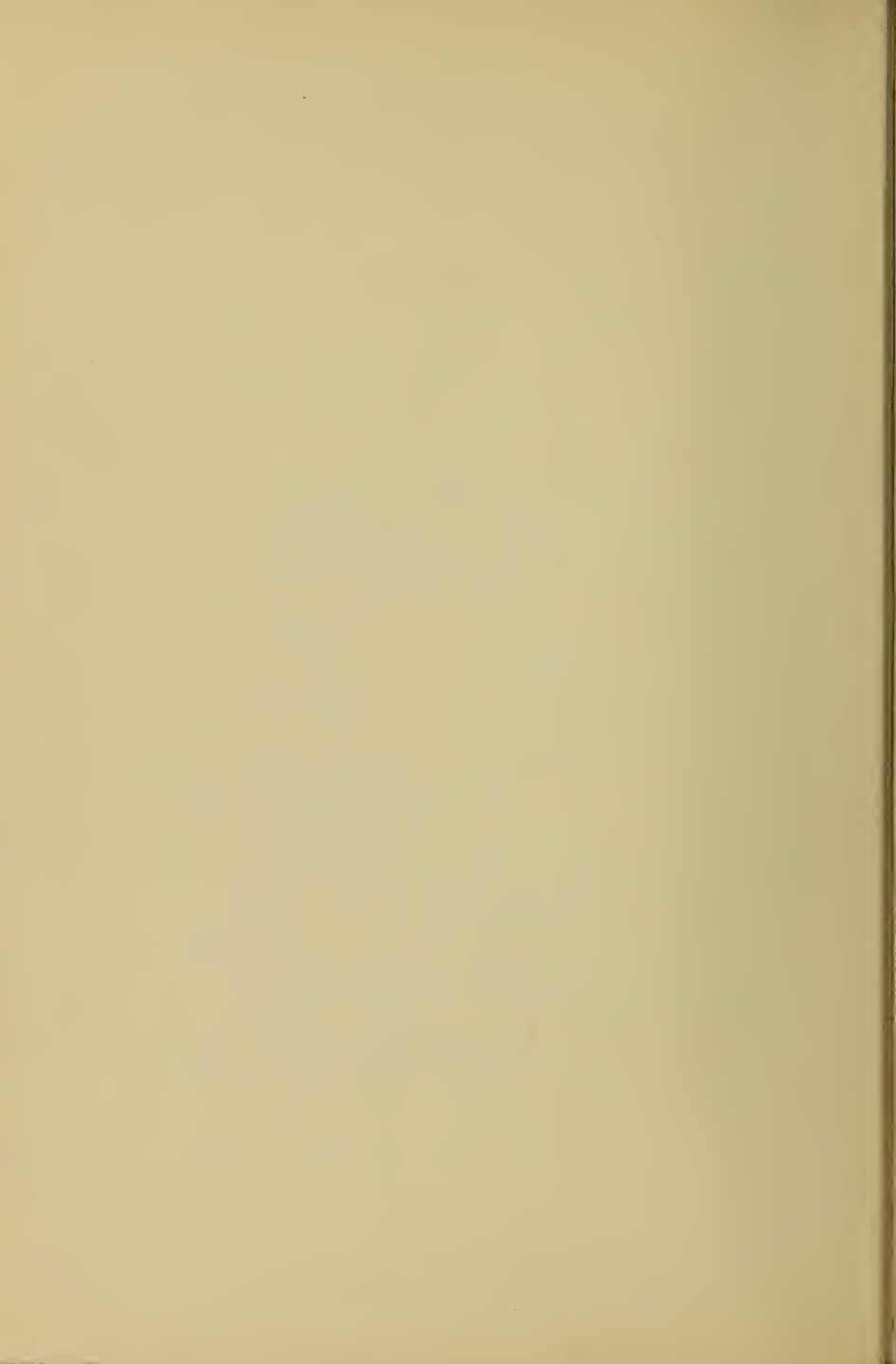
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TO
The Builders of the New World—
This Book is Reverently Dedicated



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I

BECAUSE OF BEAUTY



ROSE FIRE

Life is an acorn whose immortal tree
Mounts in the sun beyond our measured sight.
We, underground, believing what we see,
Dream, in our ignorance, it still is night
And hug our little shell, and drink the soil,
While some there be who tell the Spring's advance,
And some who sorrow with its tug and toil,
And others yet who know as in a trance
The rose fire of a world by us unseen,
And sing of sunlight where no sunlight goes,
And where no green is, prophesy the green,
And where no rose can be, foretell the rose.
O let us fling to-day our folded powers
And claim the eternal beauty that is ours!

TO A TREE IN JUNE

Spirit of Beauty embodied in this lovely tree,
Behind whose wingéd emerald glory
Billows of snowy clouds move ceaselessly,
Hear my impassioned cry, my vow this day! . . .
Huge flower of God, thy petals brush the doorstep of
 Heaven;
Thy topmost plumes caress the lattices where angels
 wait;
Thy last soaring leaf arrives the celestial gate.
Beauty, thou hast penetrated my heart's core.
Thou hast won me utterly, from this day forth
And forevermore.
Command my ways, Spirit of Beauty. . . .
Give me the harshest task, the cruelest duty;

Give me whips, that I may scourge ugliness from the
mind of man.

Give me a tongue, that I may cry it to the unhearing
earth;

Give me new wit, give me words of lilting mirth,
Give me the grace to say a thousandth part of all thou
sayest. . . .

O Beauty, in thy presence, I make once more my vow.
I, even I, will tell of thee;

I will cry aloud, "Make straight the paths, make
straight the way,
For I have seen Beauty . . . have seen the Maker
suddenly."

MOODS

TO-NIGHT

To-night is like the heart of a black pansy,
With spots of yellow—stars.
I will lean my head upon that pillow of enchantment,
And know the petalled loveliness of stars.
I will sink deep into the hollow of a pansy-black
night.

LARKSPUR

I have a mood like larkspur and bachelor buttons;
I have a clean, blue-blossom mood this morning,
Decorative, bright, colorful.
Not like my damson days of rich enjoyment;
Nor my softly-riding yesterday upon the river;
Nor steel-blue, granite mornings that strike sparks from
the will.
Not like any other mood of morning, noon or twilight.
Red rambler roses beckon me across the terraces;
Tiger lilies, honeysuckle, peonies, call.

There is a red-bronze oak tree standing in burnished
beauty,

And poppies, like pagan parasols, flaunting their scarlet,
Almost irresistible.

But I like my larkspur mood the best, to-day.

I crave the tonic of blue delphinium, the candid look of
cornflowers,

Keen, colorful, a ministry to the mind.

I will fill my mind and soul with satisfying blue.

For I have a mood like larkspur and bachelor buttons—

I have a clean, blue-blossom mood this morning,

And all the crimson hues must wait!

POPLARS IN THE WIND

They dreamed so long of all the flying things—
Flying clouds, with opalescent wings;
Flying birds, who had no fetters anywhere,
All the enraptured creatures of the air—
That, when the storm came sweeping down the sky,
They lifted all their leaves with the one cry:
“Now—now we shall fly!”

And I, who saw them romping in high glee,
Whose torn, mad banners boasted liberty,
Said: “There is something here of wild adventure and
delight,
For trees are surely wingéd creatures poised for flight,”
And watched their revelry and almost seemed to see
How every tossing branch was saying, “Free! Free!”
Enchanted of the sky, each tree forgetting
Its earthly setting.

But in the rain-stilled quiet of the afternoon
I passed again, and saw how all too soon

Their revelry had ended, and each stood
Subdued and chastened by the rebuking wood.
Each stared with wonder on the enduring ground,
Where still their roots had anchor, firmly bound
By laws that had no thought for yearning cries
Or longing branches, straining toward the skies.

Thinking of human poplars whom I knew,
Musing, I said: "The same grim law holds true—
People, like trees, reach out to claim the sky,
Just to be free! Theirs, too, the same wild cry.
Theirs, too, the dream of fetters cast away,
Till comes the quiet of the revealing day.
And lo! rebuking laws whose roots are found
Deeper than any tree that ties the ground,
Sunk in the conscience of the human race,
No frenzied wish may tear them from their place;
No dream of any tree may lift it from the sod,
No word of man may change the laws of God.
By being faithful to their human bars
Mortals and trees may tower to the stars."

THE CACTUS FLOWER

It stood upon its horny stalk, a blaze, an iridescence,
A wonder-shape that softly seemed to flower
Out of the dusty hour.
Its petals poised as fine as fairyland
Gave to the idle air a vivid motion,
A stir, a scintillation . . . a betraying
Of rhythm beyond our sense.
I felt, but could not touch, I saw but could not claim
The intensity of that invisible flame.

O cactus bloom, for me you are a voice;
You have a Word made audible and sweet
In radiance that quivers and is caught
Back to itself, the while I dumbly stare
To find the secret that has made you fair.
You have a Word! You, risen to your own,
Mounting affliction as an emerald throne. . . .
I hear you, cactus flower!

COOL AS A BIRD

Cool as a bird would I be,
Saved from the city's unrest,
Dropping the world from my breast,
Careless, enraptured and free.

Cool as a bird would I fly,
Far from the city's despair,
Tasting the sweet of the sky,
Tossed in the uttermost air.

Heat is a hammer of brass;
Earth is the anvil it beats.
Parched are the roofs and the streets,
Worn are the people that pass.

Worn are the people who herd,
Hot with the noise and the steam.
Oh, to be off like a bird,
Light as the fringe of a dream!

Oh to be rocked in a tree,
Dark and delicious and still,
Sipping the rain at my will—
Thus like a bird would I be!

Parched are the ways of mankind,
Hot are the hatreds of men—
God, won't you help us to find
Coolness and comfort again?

WONDER

What is clover?
I ask it over and over.
Lying adrift in a rhythm of red,
The meadow's ocean about me spread,
Washed by the surge of its sweet unrest,
The wonder gathers within my breast. . . .
What is clover?

And what is honeysuckle?
I ask it through the luscious day
And through the deep entrancing night
When perfume is as real as light.
It almost makes me feel afraid
To wonder how is fragrance made?

I yearn to know what daisies are.
It fascinates me as a star
To look on petals fresh as day
Along the meadow's Milky Way.

Sorrel and daisies—what are these,
And clover, visited by bees?

Lying afloat in a scarlet sea,
The earth has drifted from under me.
The sky is purple upon my sight,
Marbled softly with moving white.
What is living? Immense, divine,
Beyond your reasoning or mine!

THE END OF THE FEAST

Day's feast is over, and his careless arm
Shoves the remaining wine glass to the table's edge. . . .
It wavers, topples to its crimson ruin,
While a great stain spreads across the sky's pure damask.

A MILK-WHITE BUTTERFLY

A milk-white butterfly, with spotted wing,
Poised on a purple thistle bud—a lovely thing!—
Summoned my senses from their wandering;
Drew, in a second's time, my gaze from everywhere
To one ecstatic circle in the air. . . .
Captured and held me, deified, enthralled,
As if the angel Gabriel had called.

Acres of softly undulating wheat
Slow feathering beneath the August heat;
Billows of meadow beauty, where the grass
Reddened to see the youths and maidens pass;
And golden rod . . . and golden rod!—
That royal aspiration of the sod,
The final utterance of all earth tries to say
In one rich summer day.

While over me the sky swung like a silver bell,
Whose walls were azure winds that rose and fell,
And mid-day sun was blazing on the sea

Whose waters called and ever called to me. . . .
Yet on that single point of pure perfection could
 I gaze
As if it held the focus of Creation's rays. . . .
O milk-white butterfly with spotted wing
'Tis you have told me everything!
I know, I know my dreams will all come true—
O butterfly, I fix my faith on you!

THE MOON, A RED SICKLE

The moon, a red sickle, garners the ripe darkness
Low on the horizon.

To-night she will gather her harvest of grain. . . .

Star upon star in her crescent of ruby will gather.

I shall be lying asleep in the coolness of midnight,

Dreaming of stars that drop in the indigo air;

Dreaming of stars that are falling like wheat in the
darkness. . . .

Who shall say how the fragrance of stars shall seem?

I shall be glad if the scent is as sweet as the meadow

Where in the new mown grass I was resting at twilight;

I shall be glad if the fragrance of stars is lovely as
new mown grass.

SKETCHES IN WHITE

SNOW SKY

A wall of white, wistfully still.
Birds like fitful bowknots of black velvet
Painted on porcelain while I wait,
Forming and unforming to an unseen motif,
Then suddenly withdrawn.
As if the dissatisfied artist
Tried this decoration and that,
Leaving at last a blankness
On the sufficient page.

THE HEART UNTOUCHED

I am cold and detached as crystal,
Holding within my being the passion of myriad
 colors,
Yet aware of none.
When will the revealing torch of sunlight
Pierce the whiteness
And set my prismatic splendor free?

HYMN TO DECEMBER

Blow, splendid wind, across my day;
Blow hard, blow bitter and unkind;
Be rough, be ruthless on thy way,
Sweep clean the forest of my mind.

O wind, no withered tree let stand!
No sundered bough or futile vine.
Like scattered leaves at thy command,
My cares and whims and woes are thine.

O wind across the winter sun,
Where crystal fires burn deep and cold,
My spirit, too, would leap and run—
My will as thine be fierce and bold.

But thou art comrade to the sky,
Unhindered is thine onward sweep,
Thou hast no fetters such as I,
No human paths of pain to keep.

Blow, bitter wind till all my blood
Sings high and sweet as birds in Spring.
Bring thaw and rain and April flood,
Bring leaf and bud and lifted wing.

O wind, blow on, nor let there be
One cranny where thy force is not.
Blow on, till every path is free
And all but splendor is forgot!

THE RAIN HAS MADE A CURTAIN

The rain has made a curtain
Flung softly into view.
The rain has made a lacey thing
More lovely than we knew.
Our window had no drapery
Save want and work and pain,
But oh, the gods have sent to us
A curtain made of rain!

I knew the dark was wonderful,
I loved the taste of air—
But oh I did not know the rain
Could weave a thing so fair;
That in a narrow frame like this
On common glass unheeded
Her dainty hands could spin a stuff
So beautifully beaded,

A web so frail with fairyland
I dare not touch the glass—

I hold my breath and shade the lamp
For fear the dream might pass.

O shrouded windows of the rich
Behind your stiff brocade,
I wish your owners all might look
Before the patterns fade.
I wish your sudden eyes could see
God's breath upon the pane. . . .
As when the dark has brought to us
A curtain made of rain!

SUDDEN A SEA GULL

A sky like thin blue milk,
The Palisades mist covered;
Waters like frozen silk
Where vivid sails once hovered.
The sun's face dimly seen
Like woman's through her veiling,
A breath of air less keen
Than Winter wailing.

Sudden above the stark
And iron banded river,
Moving amid the dark
I see a something quiver. . . .
As if an icy bar
Should break itself and fling
A severed portion far
On crystal wing. . . .

As if a snow bank, swift
To answer the sun's crying,

Had tried in vain to lift
Her heaviness to flying,
So sent to him instead
Her wingèd heart as token.
Ah Love, look overhead
The Spring has spoken!

THE CHOIRS OF SPRING

In all the Spring there is no sweeter stir
Than waking green of larch and juniper,
Nor is there lovelier music anywhere
Than when the birches hang their leafy halos in the
air.

March blows the doors of earth's cathedral wide,
And brings her surpliced choirs of singing rain,
That patient multitudes may surge inside,
Out of the winter's pain.

Spring's incandescence makes the meadows bright
With lamps enough to keep earth's altars white;
And the cold penitence of February sod
Is swung by April's censers up to God.

TO A NEWLY PLANTED FIELD AT NIGHT

Something is stirring here,
Under the moth-gray sky,
Nursed by the April air
Miracles hover nigh.
Acres of quiet soil
Breathing with lungs unseen
Answer our human toil
With promises of green.

Something is stirring here,
Silent and slow and deep.
Almost I think I hear
How tiny roots may creep
And small seeds grow.
Something has happened here. . . .
I, too, am torn awake;

All that I held as dear
Reborn for beauty's sake.
Up from the earth a sigh,
Deep in the heart a thrill. . . .
Life, hear thou too my cry:
"I will, I will!"

LISTEN!

The wedded earth wheels round the sun,
The sun transfigures all the earth;
Comes March to tell us Spring's begun,
Comes June to give the roses birth—
And all is done with melody!
With melody it all transpires.
We do not hear
With inner ear,
We do not see the flaming choirs.

We see the sodden field and marsh;
The stony hill, the dreary round;
The task is long, the lesson harsh,
The street is clamorous with sound
The shriek, the roar, the clanging bell,
The traffic of the crowded ways
Shatter the silk of April days.
We do not know that all is well,
Nor hear the organ undertone
That blends all threnodies in one.

Yet all is done with melody,
With melody the year begins.
A heavenly harmony that spins
Its web of rapture round the stars,
Gathers the earth within its bars,
And humming, humming, rich and low,
Follows the rumbling trains that go,
And sings within the engine's throat,
Melting to music every note.

Some night, when you are thrilled awake
By silences that throb and fall,
Or in the day time, best of all,
When you are hushed for beauty's sake—
Lo, humming, humming everywhere
Under the rails and in the air
Your ear may hear the strains that start,
Upwelling from the Creator's heart.

APRIL EVENING

The rim of the ruby colored sun quietly disappears.
Now an intense pause, pierced by the sleighbell chorus
 of frogs;
The chirping and gurgling and singing
Of myriad frogs in the marshes.
The passionate song of frogs across the cold perfume
Of early grass and newly furrowed sod.
Forsythia blooms strive with their yellow
To put out the dark.
A curved crystal blade cuts the velvet of clouds,
And oh, riding a black billow. . . .
Venus, resplendent, immortal!

THE CLEAVING POWER

A bit of lichen, growing on a rock, may in the end
Its granite substance rend.

A bit of moss,

Airy as angel floss,

May draw the moisture and the fructifying earth
To give the forest birth.

"See," said the geologist, "on every side

Is seen the record of the glacier's stride;

How all this rugged and amazing land

Is written deeply by the historic hand

Of grinding ice or overleaping fire.

Yet, so seductive is the faint desire

Of tiny lichen, fastened upon stone,

That even these frail tentacles, alone—

Fingers of lace that beckon day by day—

May draw the force that bids the rock give way,

Causing the hemlock and the pine to spring

Where long ago there was no growing thing."

"How can it be," I mused, "that lichen is a blade

Cutting a path through rocks the centuries have
made?"

He told it clear. . . .

How moisture, year by year
Held by the lichen, freezes into force,
Becomes a wedge of power in its course,
And soil drops down within the fissure's close
embrace,
And seed finds welcome in that sheltered place.
And I, who listened to the lesson of the rock,
Felt my whole being waken to the shock,
While some obscuring bar within my soul gave way
Making a wider crevice for the day. . . .

What if a *thought*—a tiny, lichen thought—
Should rend the ills the centuries have wrought;
What if the power of persistent Will
Should cleave its way as water does, until
Throughout the solid ramparts of the night
A crevice shows the coming in of Light!

WATER

Wonderful water! You are a splendor and a perplexity
together. . . .

Fluid immortal made common for the use of man.

I see you spurting white and slender from the faucet in
my kitchen;

I hear you sharp and sudden at my window,
Your needles broken against the resisting glass.

I see you driving through the roads and pavements,
While dust lies down in reverence before you.

I find you hoarded in the cups of morning glories;
You are quicksilver on the puckered green of maple leaves,
Fresh and delightful after storm.

I see you bearing up the graceful bodies of strong
swimmers,

Yet in that hour you drown a hundred men at sea.
You span with loveliness the tall doorway of Heaven,
Holding suspended the passion of the sun.

I find you flashing from a million coronets
Within the sublime democracy of the meadow.

Water, you are a marvel of the Creator's genius—
My eyes would measure and behold your beauty!

Oh, you are slim and sinuous,
You are seductive, water—you are very fair.
Curling your happy way across the continent,
Leaping all barriers with laughing courage,
Shaking your tresses out upon the rocky hillside,
Fringing a beaded robe to hide your nakedness. . . .
You are a woman, water—
One whose entrancing ways my heart should understand.

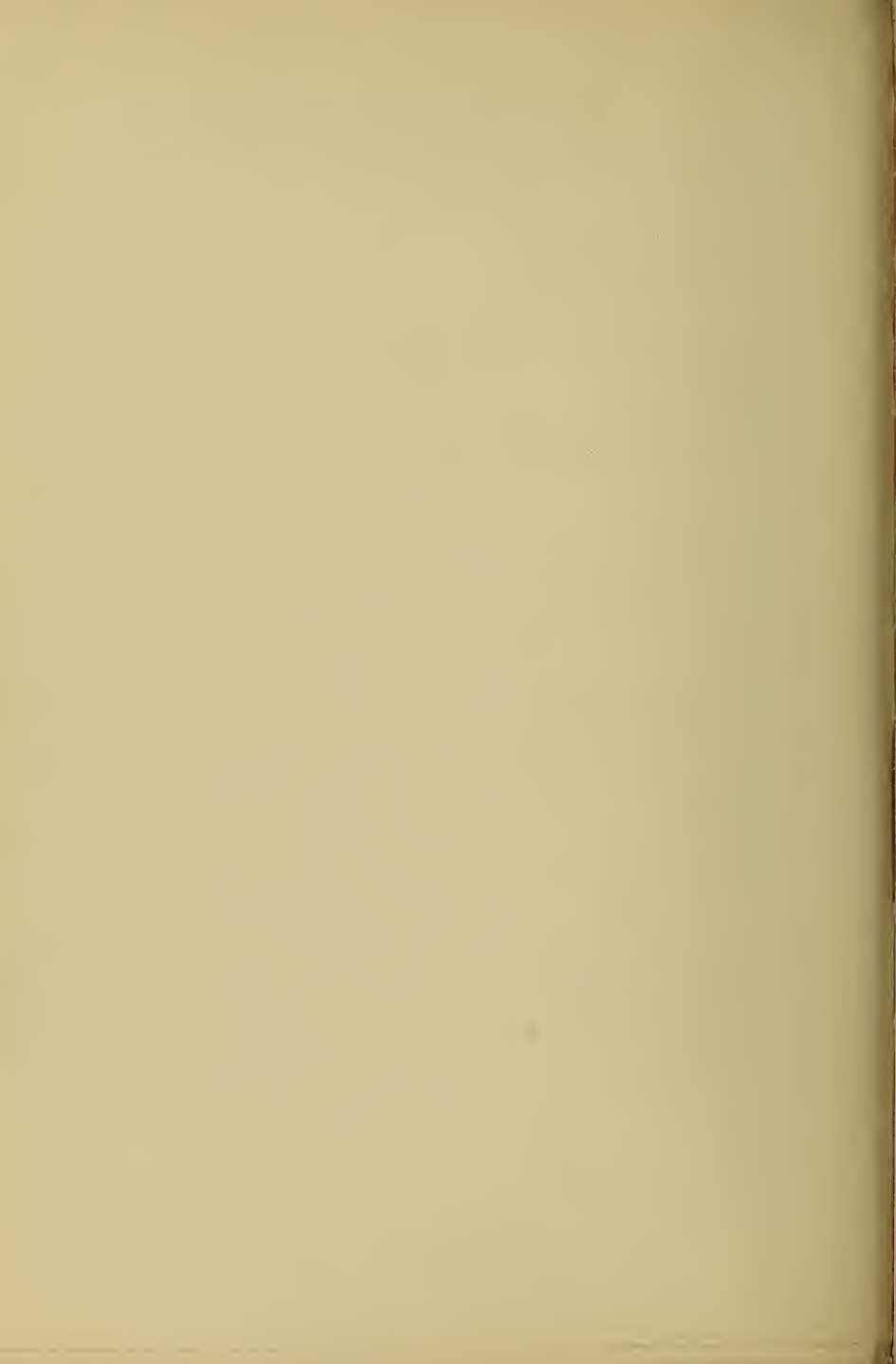
Nay, you are more than woman—you are Niagara,
Urging your steeds to goals of danger and despair.
I see their white manes flowing down the mountain
fastnesses,
I hear the trampling of their hoofs, their thunder;
I see them pitiless upon the frantic ocean,
Where giant ships like petals are whirling in the gale.
O you are mighty in your majesty and strength, water!
You are a devastation and a sustenance in one.

Unconquered, you are a devil, you are a wanton,
Tamed and adored, you are a necklace round the throat
of Nature,
You are Niagara, chained and attentive to the word of
man.

How can you be so huge a thing and yet so tiny?
How can you be so black and terrible upon the ocean,
Yet tremble like a tear drop on the rose within my hand?

II

LOVE



LOVE'S BESTOWAL

What shall my love be to the world?
What shall my love, thwarted in its beginning,
Be to the desert world?
Shall I lie in the smothering sand all day
Crying, "Woe is me?"
Shall I cover my body and soul with sand?
Shall I wail as others wail under the brassy sky,
"No God, no love, nor rescue anywhere?"
Nay, I shall never basely say, "There is no God!"
Under the lovely desert stars I shall not dare deny;
Under the cooling stars I am too brave to die.
I, who have tasted water, shall not faint nor rest
Till I again have found that ecstasy.
I, who have tasted water know that God is good,
And I shall gird my soul and lift my heart,
Singing the Truth amid the desert waste.

Yea, I have loved! And that one crystal drink
Beckons beyond the parched and prostrate hour.
I shall not cease nor tarry till the world

Drinks of the same divine, enchanted stream,
Nor till that cool delirium has spread
Its saving waters over all the earth
I shall not courage yield.
I, who have touched the lips of Life, shall never rest
Till all the desert lives.
I, who have seen the blossom and the bird, may
 never tire
Until the desert blooms!

LOVE, THE MAGICIAN

I have been multiplied a thousand times.
I have been strangely multiplied and made over;
My heart's cathedral hears a myriad chimes
In the one voice of my lover.
Eyes am I given, of many-orbed intent,
Since sight and hearing with his own are blent.
For where before two beings stood beneath the sun
There dwells but one.

I have been multiplied a million ways
To meet the new-born glory of my lover.
My life, that was a timid candle blaze,
Bloweth the whole world over.
No mad magician ever spun so sweet a spell
As the Elysium in which we dwell.
Dearest, my life was as a single stream
Going its way within the forest cover,
With no companion save the lonely Dream—
Until you came, my lover!
You came, and miracle on miracle repeating

Joined us with other streams that sped the more,
Till all the waters of the world were beating
At our hearts' door.
Dear, can it be that we, in loving, find the ocean
Where plunge the human heart-streams in their
course,
Pouring through all Eternity their great devotion,
Each in the other finding the One Source?

YOU LEFT ME FREE

You left me free, nor asked that there should be
One word to heal your heart's intensity;
Nor kiss nor vow you took, who worshipped me
As strong crusaders worship Deity.
You left me free—ah, would your hands had found
A hundred ways to hold me tightly bound!

You left me free—O dearest, could there be
A chain more cruel than your cold decree,
A sadder bondage than is left to me,
The utter slave of love's futility?
You left me free, nor knew that I should go
The fettered path the single-hearted know!

You left me free of all your hidden sighs,
Held back the leaping answer in your eyes:
You masked your longing with a strange disguise,
You closed the gleaming door of Paradise. . . .
And yet no wedded soul more wed could be
Than I to you whose word would set me free.

WISHES AT DAWN

I made three wishes, as I stood
Staring upon the roofs at dawn.
The freshened air was faintly good
And stirred the curtains, gently drawn;
And stirred my lonely spirit, too,
Thrilling me as it used to do.

I made three wishes, like a song,
And gazed upon the dawn outspread.
I wished you to be great and strong,
I prayed you would be comforted.
The red sun rose upon the roofs,
Clattered the sound of waking hoofs.

I said: "No matter whose the hand
That heals his wound and gives him rest
I love him, and shall understand.
The fate that severs us is best."
I made three wishes—God must know
My heart's capacity for woe!

LOVER'S MOON

The moon unfolded like a rose,
Above a sea of malachite.
Oh, softly came the moon to-night
As faintly as a bud that blows.

The moon unfolded, flushed and sweet—
My startled spirit cried your name—
Her heart was yellow as a flame.
I wonder did you hear it beat?
I wonder could you hear my cry?
Oh lovely is a moon that glows
Above the darkness like a rose
And sheds her petals for reply.

A MAN TO A WOMAN

And you shall walk with other loves
Because I left you free;
Of other souls shall take your fill
Who loved the soul of me.
And you shall have your feast with those
Who never saw my face. . . .
And yet beside you at the board
My heart shall have its place.

And though you seek for Arcady
Where once you sought for me,
And though with others you may share
Our Paradisal tree,
So greatly doth your spirit hold
My being in its spell,
That he whose word shall comfort you
Shall comfort me as well.

In other climes and other years
Beyond the alluring sea,

Oh you shall go your wilful way
Who might have gone with me.
And you shall give to other loves
What you to me denied,
And you shall call him what you will
Who dwelleth by your side. . . .

So deeply hath my spirit claimed
Its old captivity,
That he who clasps the form of you
Shall hold the heart of me.
With other friends the future years
Your cycle shall fulfil,
Yet I who stand from you apart. . . .
I am your lover still!

SEPARATION

Why should the days be sun-caressed and sweet,
Without you, dear?
Why should winds woo the grasses at my feet
And you not here?
Why should the hours be shaken through with song;
Why should the sky and sea rejoice the whole day
 long
Unless your eyes can look and love it too,
As my eyes do?

HOW COULD I KNOW?

How could I know that this, which meant to me
My going forth into Infinity,
Flesh left behind and selfishness forgot,
Love but the shining sea where sin is not,
Life but an ocean luminous and vast
In which our separate spirits merged at last. . . .

How could I know that love, which meant to me
Beauty and light and sheer divinity,
Should mean the doom of your aspiring soul,
The flood that swept your being from its goal;
That like a strong armed swimmer you would take
The cruel course, for love and duty's sake;
Nor looking back across the enchanting sea
Would strike your path alone, away from me!

GIFTS

Give daisies to my thoughts and let them play
Like children dancing on the green in May.
Give tulips to my hopes and let them stand
Like crimson courage in a bitter land.

Give wings unto my grief, that it may fly
A bird of beauty in the morning sky. . . .
Oh give the lie to all my petty ills,
And to my somber moments, daffodils.

Give roses for my doubt, and for my pain
Give hyacinths upcurling in the rain.
Give roots unto my dreams and let them grow
So deep in earth, I may not let them go.

Give harvest to my toil in sheaves of gold,
Bring fire unto my hearth in winter cold,
But to my love, no human offering. . . .
For love is fire, and faith, and hope, and Spring!

TO THOSE WHO LOVED HIM

(A WIFE SPEAKS OF HER FORMER RIVALS)

I am sorry for my sister women—
Those who loved but could not have my dearest.
Their wan looks tell how they have pined for him.
It pierces me to see his beauty
And know that they forever
Must go unsatisfied.
They seem like me; they are indeed
As I when I yearned and could not see him.
They are my selves, my other selves,
Hungering and thirsting for what life would not give.

I look on them in pity, encompassing, understanding.
I look on them with sympathy, deep, full bosomed,
Suffering as a mother suffers
In the grief of her children.
O sisters, he is love embodied, and you have loved him—
Such is the grief of earth.
And I who live within his daily presence,

I who drink and drink till I am drenched with happiness
As earth is drenched with the radiant certainty of God—

I look on you and yearn above you.
O sisters, seek your own loves,
Find for yourselves the complement
Of heart and mind and being,
For life is without form and void
Till Love's creative word.

III

THE CITY

CITY SMOKE

How beautiful is smoke that breathes
Above the city's brawl,
And like a fairy lady wreathes
Her scarf upon the wall.

How strange a heart is hers, who then
Dissolving into space
Bequeaths unto the eyes of men
No knowledge of her face.

How lovely is her chariot
Whose steeds are never heard,
So eerily they move across
The far path of the bird.

I think she hath but little care
For noisy pangs of earth;
For chimneys or for engines where
Her loveliness had birth.

And can it be such ugly things
Begot this butterfly?
O city, you have angel's wings;
O Maker, so have I!

THE SKYSCRAPER

Beautiful ship, striding a ceaseless ocean,
Borne on the crest of the turbulent human tide,
Flying your flag in the wind of the city's emotion—
Beautiful ship of the town, how tall you ride!

Magical ship, with wind-borne clouds behind you,
Fleece of the sky foaming against your prow,
Never before has my vision chanced to find you
Mightily moving against the day as now.

Never before have I caught your soul resplendent
Flying above the city's dark and noise;
Never before have I seen your bulk transcendent
Plowing the turgid wave with heavenly poise.

Wonderful ship on the seas of commerce riding,
Here's to your goal and the triumph of coming in!
These are the hearts of America you're striding,
These are the goals of America you win.

THE GREAT SCENARIO

MANHATTAN—AT TIMES SQUARE

Here is the huge confession brightly spelled—
Man's wild antipathy to solitude;
The sight of spaces and of stars withheld,
That Babylon may house her fevered brood.

Manhattan, O, Manhattan, more and more
The ancient dream of fellowship comes true.
As through your streets the myriad nations pour,
Their hopes, their dreams, their faith belong to you.

Here is the thirst for pleasure sharp and sweet,
Man's cluttered craving blotting out the sun;
The stream of presences, the rain of feet,
A thousand feelings flooding into one.

Manhattan, you are filmed across the dark,
Of great scenarios the most commanding;
I wonder if the gods behold your spark. . . .
And does a city beckon to their understanding?

MARIGOLD NIGHT

(CITY STREETS ON A RAINY EVENING)

Marigold night, running mellow and mellow,
Tempting my feet with your sumptuous yellow,
Marigold street with your riotous bloom,
Almost I smell your enticing perfume.
Loving each star on its shadowy stalk,
On through your luminous gardens I walk.
Treading your flowers, unhurt they remain,
Blooming afresh in the beauty of rain.

GIRLS

Pretty, twinkling girls,
Blowing along Fifth Avenue,
I like you. I am cheered by you.
Of you I heartily approve.
You are like sudden flowers in a dark canyon—
Starring the gloom with color and delight.
Each delicate face on a fragile stem,
Framed for bewitchment and surprise.
A little breeze sets all your leaves fluttering;
A radiance flashes out of you;
Each slender step is like a sunbeam,
Shining because it must.
Man made the canyon, but God made flowers.
What is the Power that makes you as you are—
Bright-blowing, beautiful girls?

Glittering, gorgeous girls,
Dancing along Broadway,
What is the urge that makes you as you are—
Brilliant, challenging, restless, feverish,

Every glance a thrust of fate,
Every pulse a cry for Fame and Power and Splendor—
You are insatiable flame, you are burning winds
Blowing across the town.

Daring, courageous maidens,
Trudging along Sixth Avenue,
Little workers from big families,
Toilers brave in the boisterous, uncaring town—
Out of the crowded and smothered conditions of home,
How have you come?
Tell me the secret, dear little girl with the buckle, the
wing and the rose—
Cramming your hat box under the bed at night;
Washing and pressing and sewing when others are
sleeping;
Folding away your ribbons and girdles and ties—
Sweet Cinderella, guarding your glittering shoes—
I will sing of you, I will sing a song just for you—
Wonderful, wonderful girls!

THE CHARIOT OF THE AGE

I am a Purpose powerful and swift,
The uttered Longing of the human race,
The spoken Struggle of the Mind
Triumphant over space.
I am the Will of yesterday to lift
The burdens of to-day from all mankind.

I am the Dream of toilers at the loom,
Hope of the surging multitude of men
Prisoned within the sordid city's gloom. . . .
I am the Vision shining in their den,
Bearing the worn and fretted souls, Aladdin-wise
To fairy hills and blossoming blue skies.

In the red hours of sudden mortal grief
I am the speeding angel of relief.
Swift as an arrow from the bow is sent,
I am His messenger, on mercy bent. . . .
I am His lightning, I am His steed
To answer human need.

I am the panting engine of the heart;
The energy of every part
Made visible at last; I am the thrill,
The spur and splendor of the human will,

I am the Soul of man unfettered from its cage—
I am the chariot of the golden age.

TO A RAILROAD TRAIN AT NIGHT

Train, with your long white feather flying in the moon-
glow,

You are young love, keeping its tryst with delight,

You are rapture, speeding across the night.

Train, with your pulses pounding,

You are ambition, radiant, resounding.

You are the shout of the soul's first divination,

The heart's great acclamation.

Pushing ahead to the teeming town's fruition,

You are the harnessed will, the piercing intuition.

Sparks from your passion painting the midnight sky,

Looking neither to right nor left as you race by. . . .

You are the Great Adventurer flying to greet the day,

You are the mind's electric purpose trained to the narrow
way;

You are determination, ardent, single-hearted,

Seeing no track but yours, no other goal, no turning. . . .

Train, with your headlight burning,

You are human yearning!

IV

SONGS OF COURAGE

THE LUMINOUS HEART

The heart more luminous than dawn denies
The slanders love hath borne for mortal sake;
Her gaze is wider than the earth's mistake,
She flieth higher than an eagle flies.
Yet naught of love is hidden from her eyes—
She knoweth all who sleep and all who wake;
Upon her breast the hues of morning break
To spell the immortal secret of the wise.
That golden word of the eternities
No human law may find, no net may snare;
No creeping thought may gather what it is,
For only that which climbeth the blue air,
The heart more luminous than any dawn,
Loves and transfigures what it looks upon.

TO MADAME CURIE

How great her travail, who went forth to find
Out of creation's void, the hidden spark;
The glowing substance that would heal mankind,
The light elusive, springing from the dark.

How beautiful her ardor, to explore
Those mighty boundaries that yield no rest.
How patient was the brooding love that bore
The splendor of the burden at her breast.

How true to love was she, who yielded all—
The rich and subtle purpose of her brain;
Her heart, her soul, her body, to the call,
And paid the price immortal, for our gain.

Down in the darkness of creation's womb
How long, how long the enchanted secret lay,
Until the hand of science from the tomb
Brought forth her child into the light of day.

Here is the clue to that colossal theme
Spreading its clamor through our seething
days—

May she who stands as motherhood supreme
Nurture humanity in larger ways?

May she whose agony has brought to birth
The miracle of daughter or of son
Bear other miracles, of noble worth—
May woman do for earth what man has done?

Mother of light, you answer well their quest
Who fought for woman's liberty, and died.
In you, how greatly is their dream confessed.
It is enough! Our age is satisfied.

TO JANE ADDAMS

Gazing upon a lofty mountain range
Where dome on dome of splendor seemed to rise,
Each like a challenge beautiful and strange
Of some fair temple painted on the skies,
I pondered who among the nobly good
Will rise against the canvas of all time;
From out the host of earth's misunderstood,
Whose name shall ring as a cathedral chime?
Whose are the deeds so lofty and so pure
No pinnacle may match their silver height?
Whose is the majesty that shall endure
Amid the immensities of future light?
You who have mourned the saving Christ as dead,
Behold Him risen in her heart instead!

“ANCESTRY”

(SONG OF THE LIBERATED MAN)

Courage is my Progenitor,
My source the Primal Will,
My chariot the shining globe
That whirls beneath me still.
The North Star and the Polar Sea
Whispered and dreamed and thought of me—
The Gulf Stream said that I should be.

The Pleiades have mothered me
And held me on their breast;
The Four Winds welcomed me from South
And North and East and West.
The great hills of the ruddy earth
Did leap to celebrate my worth—
The laughing rivers hailed my birth.

Go, seek your lineage, who must!
Your ancient parchments find;

No royal crest can give to man
What dwelleth not in mind.
The forests know my family tree,
The splendor and austerity
Of Him who hath begotten me.
My Father is the Universe,
The heart of Life, my mother,
And God Himself my Ancestor. . . .
I need no other!

OVERLORD

I use each grief that comes to me.
Once was a time I seemed to be
By sorrow smitten as a spear.
Each javelin of want or fear
Made holes within my heart and drew
My shuddering spirit naked, through.

But now I know I stand apart
From brain and body, mind and heart;
That never has my *being* felt
The blows by cold misfortune dealt.
The javelin that pierced me through,
The hate of foes, I never knew.
Back of the body's grief I stood
And out of evil fashioned good.

Back of the body, strong, secure,
The Self was destined to endure.
The Self that makes of pain a lyre,
And when the straining muscles tire

Touches the strings of circumstance,
Makes music of their dissonance.

This is the living Self of me,
In spite of what I seem to be.
I, the musician, strike the chord
That makes me sorrow's overlord.
Oh, once upon a time, I thought
I could not bear what sorrow brought;
But now, O grief, your sting has gone. . . .
You are the good I looked upon!

PLEDGES

ONE SPEAKS

Life is so hard!
I lean against its granite ledges
And wonder when the dawn will be;
I hurt my heart against its pledges,
Broken ceaselessly.
How can Life vaunt itself a name,
How can Life call itself so good
That gives me cold instead of flame,
And stone instead of food?

ANOTHER SPEAKS

Life is so fair!
I scarce can keep from singing
As on its bitter edge I whet my will.
O sparks of beauty from the granite springing,
O flame that answers still!
Life's pledges, broken to my narrow sense

Are all fulfilled in ways I yet shall see;
I shall behold that wider evidence
When I have kept the pledge Life asks of me!

LIFE THE HEALER

Life, the lover, yearning above us while we sleep,
Cries in our ears, "Take—take—it is yours to keep!"
Pours in our veins her own reviving red,
Pillows upon her breast the ailing head,
Life, the healer, cries as a lover cries,
Breathing above the pallid lips and weary eyes:
"Only believe—behold me warm and true!
Only believe the love I have for you."

Life, the mother, sings to her children while they sleep;
"Take, take of my love! It is yours to keep."
Bends to our breathing, hushes the fretful moan,
Tenderly turns the haggard face to her own;
Speaks to the tangles knotted by human will—
Cords and tendons and nerves that obey her skill—
Smooths with her satin palm, her velvet word,
Utters the crooning sound no ear has heard:
"Oh, I have loved you all with a love past knowing!
See how my sacred fire to your need is flowing."

Then through our nerves her voltage of liquid flame. . . .
"Take, take for your own what none have dared to name.
Even the wise have never yet explored
Founts everlasting whence my stream is poured."
Life, the healer, tries as a mother tries. . . .
"Only believe me! Look—look in my eyes!
Oh, could you search my heart and believe the truth,
Life the healer would bring you immortal youth!"

SCIENCE OR SYMPHONY?

They told me an ape had been the founder of my being,
Dragged me along the evolutionary track,
Plunged me in primal ooze, with not an eye for seeing,
Clean to the single cell they took me back.
Strange how revolt against the creeds of hell
Yields no answer but the single cell!
Strange how we narrow to a clump of sod
The most high purpose of the living God!
But I went to the symphony to hear what Schumann
 said,
I went to the symphony and lifted up my head.

Label it the functioning of brute desire,
Mark it in your catalogues by whatsoever name—
Violins in unison climbed a hill of fire
And drew me ever after them in filaments of flame;
Drew me in an ecstasy immaculate and thin
Till I myself was streaming with the streaming violin.

Whence came the melody that smote me into rapture?
Whence came the ecstasy that bathed me silver bright?
How shall you catalogue and how shall you capture
Beauty out of Paradise showering in light?
Say, did it travel through the dark with man,
Cycle after cycle? Answer if you can!
Say, did it slumber in primeval slime,
Slowly emerging through the growths of time?
This will I grant you of my human tabernacle,
This will I grant you of the sinew and the bone,
Ligament and artery and cords that cannot shackle,
Serving for a little space the mind upon its throne. . . .
But I went to hear a logic that was not to be gainsaid—
I harkened to the symphony and lifted up my head.

Whence came the harmony that tore my frame asunder,
Knocked upon the cloister door where flesh and blood
are not,
Freed me from my prison house with tonal waves of
thunder,
Shook me from the body till the body was forgot?
I was a cataract bursting into glory—
(Say it of my frame that it was once that humble
thing—)
But I who heard the symphony was told another story,
I was a cataract come to greet the Spring.

I was the thunder, and the music and the splendor,
I was the love of God immutable and tender,
I was the universe and touched its farthest rim,
I was Creator and the souls that worship Him.
I was humanity with all its doubting past,
I was humanity that knew itself at last—
For I went to hear Tchaikovsky in his symphony super-
 nal,
I listened to a logic that was not to be gainsaid,
And I know that the soul of a man is eternal,
I know that a man lives on, after he is dead!



V

YOUTH AND MAGIC

THE IDEALIST

This much, O realist, would I explain to you:
I never saw the world as others do. . . .
It hung suspended in a burning haze,
A mad bewitchment running through my days.

And you who follow me with eyes of mirth
For what my soul must sing of this dull earth,
Crying, "Awake! Be mortal and not saint,
Lest through ethereal joy the body faint." . . .
To you and such as you, I only say
There never was, for me, a "common day."
My sky is firmer than the solid land.
Come! Dream with me, and you will understand.

THE SENSES

How wonderful is sight that brings
With every turning of the eye
A universe of lovely things
That swarm the earth and gem the sky.

How delicate and keenly good
The powers that would help us make
The daily ritual of food
A feast in which the gods partake.

The "common senses!" What are they
But doors that let the spirit through
To find and touch our yielding clay
And fashion as it wills to do?

I wish that he who grimly prays
For sinful souls to find their doom
Would walk abroad on April days
Or smell the orchard boughs in bloom.

I wish that he who talks of "sense"
As if it were an evil thing,
Would take the hearing's evidence
When meadow larks begin to sing.

SONGS OF THE BODY

MORNING

The sound of the water on my shoulders in the morning,
It is like silver bells out of blue.
The thrill of the water on my body in the morning
Gives courage great and new.
The cold of the water, the sting of the water,
The mirth of the water as it leaps to find me. . . .
Oh, it is lovelier than birds singing
Clear in the morning.
Oh, it is beautiful as laughing bells!

NOON

My body is the lightning rod of my spirit,
And I honor it as such.
I do not worship it, nor deem it greater than myself.
I do not confuse it with myself,
Which towers over it like iridescent fire.
Pour down upon me, O Spirit of Eternal Energy
And make my body luminous and fit for God!

THE WONDER OF SLEEP

How wonderful to drink the dark sea wave
That sucks me under, drowning me to save!—
My diving-board the pillow, whence I spring,
Exultant as a swimmer who shall fling
Body and being in that final leap
To search the immortal treasure-caves of sleep.

How different from death this drowning is;
How quick with life these green immensities,
These airs electric, bursting bubble-fine;
This sharpened sense of beauty that is mine,
This whirlpool of rejoicing where I spin,
A disembodied rapture.

Then such a silence as no mortal hears,
The deafness of the sea within my ears;
Then such a summons as the swimmer knows
As up and up through thinning wave he goes. . . .
And I, a being sleep-refreshed and thrilled
Wake from an ocean coral cave to find
The dawn light streaming through my window blind!

YOUTH

By the shapes that surge in the formless blue,
By the crags that sentry the shore with strength,
I shall be brave to compass you,
O Life, O Love! Down all the length
Of doubt and terror and hope and prayer
I shall be bold and great as air.
What if they failed who came before?
What if they died whose faith was high?
My spirit stands at a new-swung door
And God is God, and I am I!

I will compass you! I will conquer you,
Mystery by my vision spanned,
The dark shall yield when I pass through,
Eternity in my hand.
I will search above, I will pierce beneath,
I will strip the universe of its sheath.
What if they fell who sought for Truth?
What if they drank the dregs of pain?
I am the Voice of dauntless Youth—
I am their Quest, come back again!

WHERE STARS ARE BORN

I went to the place last night where stars are born,
Opening soft and still like tender corn,
Held on the slender stalk of the quiet morn.

Folded close in clouds like little pearls asleep
The tiny seedling stars were clustered deep—
And oh, I prayed that God the baby stars would
keep!

I saw them through their blue transparent
sheathing—
It almost seemed I heard them softly breathing,
Their sweetness to the lovely dawn bequeathing.

Far in the wide plantations of the azure air
It seemed to me I climbed a silver stair. . . .

And then I saw that birth is very fair.
Oh, it was wonderful to see them growing
There in the garden of an angel's sowing. . . .
And now I am so happy, happy—knowing!

IMMANENCE

The flavor of God comes pouring from everything—
Plums and oranges, apples and grapes and dew;
The justice of God is felt in the briar's sting,
And bees, molested, may tell of His justice, too.

The courage of God comes up with the mounting sun,
His pity sounds in the dripping of crystal rain;
He blooms in the petalled west when day is done,
Under the dark he fathers the fields of grain.

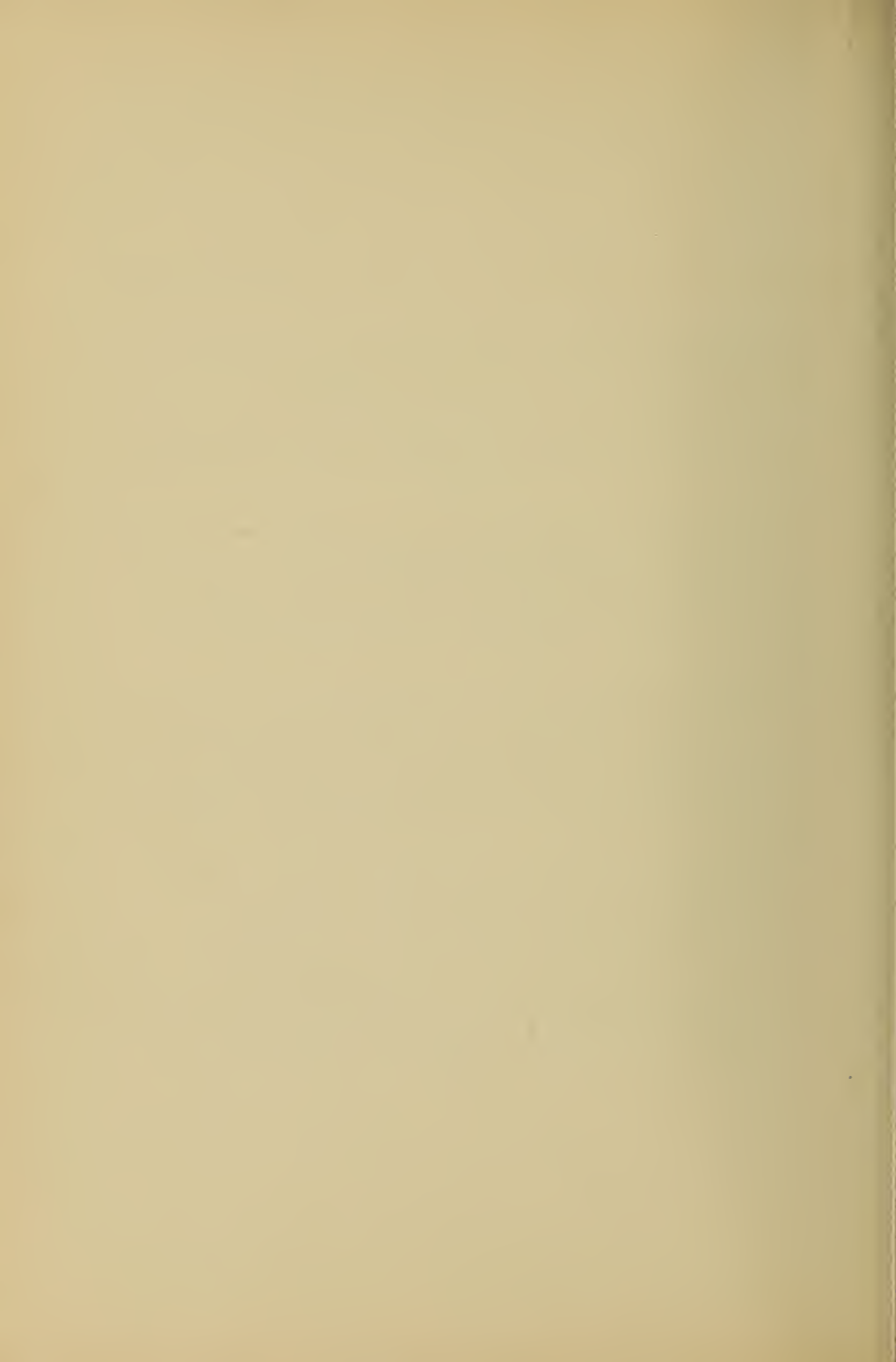
The splendor of God cries out in the souls of men;
His ardor leaps in the hearts of the sore opprest.
You who have prayed for the coming of Christ again,
Lo, He is here in the pulse of the people's breast!

Lo, He is here! And the eyes of the blind shall see.
Lo, He is here! And the lips of the dumb shall
speak.

You who would find your Lord in the life to be,
Look! In the heart of the race is the God you seek.

VI

HUMAN VERSES



NO ONE TO MEET HIM

Like a wild sea of bobbing hats and faces,
The holiday mob surged over the station floors,
flooded the corridors,
Seethed and foamed at the ticket booths and information windows.
How I first noticed him, I scarcely know . . . perhaps it was his khaki,
Conspicuous now amid civilian suits once again familiar.
Perhaps it was the lonely look he had, standing apart and waiting,
Staring across the turgid human ocean, hoping for something that had not happened yet.
Then, in the tossing crowd, I lost him, and felt a pang—
As if some tragedy lurked near me, and in this vivid stream
I felt the sudden pressure of its tide against my heart.
Oh, we are all one stream—one living, palpitating stream—

And what one soul is feeling, washes in waves upon
another soul, sometimes.

But then—to-day was not a day for sorry moods or
fancies!

This was a day of flags and cheers and lusty celebra-
tion.

This was the nation's day of independence,
The family's day of freedom and glad reunion.
Everywhere, friends! Everywhere, joyful and warm
assurance,

The hearty clasp of hand in hand, the cry of welcome.

"Here we are, mother! Where's the blessed baby?"

"Bobby, my dear, I thought you'd never come!"

"How are the kiddies? Ages since I saw them. . . ."

"My, but it's good to see you! Folks are
waiting. . . ."

"Come right along . . . the car is just outside . . . !"

Then, while I listened idly as to babbling waters,
Leaning against the desk where telegrams are written,
Dimly intending soon to send a message,
Sounded a voice behind me. . . . "What's the
trouble?"

"No one to meet you, son? Here . . . let me write
it!"

Even in rush hours, people may be kindly.

This was the woman operator speaking,
Reaching a hand to take the soldier's message.
There, at my elbow, bent above the paper,
Striving to write with his disabled fingers. . . .
Yes, it was he . . . the self same, lonely figure.
Scarcely a lad he looked, yet old and broken.
"Guess they forgot to come!" He said it bravely,
Gulping his disappointment down with eyes quite
 merry,
Even the while their reddened lids betrayed him.
Snatching the time, as best she could, while others
 waited,
Taking his story bit by bit, this mother woman
Struggled to make some sunshine for the soldier. . . .
He who had lain for many months in pain and dark-
 ness,
Dreaming and praying for his hour of freedom.

SHE WHO GAVE ALL

THE PESSIMIST'S VIEW

Asking nothing of life, she went
On sacrificial errands bent.
Life gave her naught, for all she spent.
For all her pity, few there were
When sorrow came, to comfort her,
And none brought frankincense or myrrh.

THE OPTIMIST'S VIEW

She needed not their feeble praise
Whose heart went singing all her days
In splendid sacrificial ways.
And she who toiled for others' good,
Because her spirit understood,
Saw not their cold ingratitude,
How could she care, who daily felt
God's beauty through her being melt?
How could she know the hurt they dealt?

TO A PAIR OF OLD WALKING SHOES

(RECALLING A MOUNTAIN CLIMB)

You have outlived the dream,
You have outlasted all
Glamour and mist and gleam,
Flush of a soul in thrall.
Little I deemed it true—
Wild was the hour, and glad—
Oh, could the sight of you
Summon the joy I had!

Earth was a fairy globe
When the crest of the hill was found;
Life was a shining robe
Wrapping us gently round.
Why should the gods descend
Binding two hearts in one,
Seeing the shadowy end
Ere happiness is done?

You have outlived the thrill—
Your leather and cloth and strings—
But once when I climbed a hill,
You fitted my feet with wings!

MEMORIES

(A WOMAN TO HER RIVAL)

Where met we? Where before have I seen your face?
Was it in Persia, Thrace, or splendid Babylon?
Were you some idol of the populace,
A pampered star whose wanton loveliness
Enthroned you in the mad heart of a king;
Mounting the stairway of his adoration
Till with your fragile hand you ruled the nation?
How crimson were your laughing lips to her
Whose rightful throne you took . . . without a stir
Of sorrow or compunction! O my friend,
I find in you the olden trace. The snare,
The tawny treachery that is your hair
Enslaved him long ago . . . I know.

Yea, we were rivals in the fevered race;
One fell behind, the other rode in triumph.
And who shall perish now and who shall stand? . . .
Nay, give me not your hand!
Where met we? Where before have I seen your face?

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

(A WOMAN SPEAKS TO HER REFLECTED IMAGE)

You must have some secret knowledge
That can keep you glad,
Smiling at my tragedies,
The hurts that make me sad.
You must know some happy thing
Beyond this range of woe,
That helps your eyes to hold their light,
Your lips to keep their glow.

You must guard some certainty
Of triumphs yet unseen,
To smile fulfilment back at me
When life is starved and lean.
You must know some deeper lore
Than schools of learning teach,
From some fountain you must drink
Beyond the body's reach.

From a source unknown to earth

Your radiance must spring;
Not a trace I find in you
Of any sorry thing.
Nothing of my sacrifice,
Nothing of my pain—
Almost it would seem that sorrow
Sorroweth in vain!

I shall trust the thing you say
Whatever be my lot;
Grim disasters of the hour
I accept them not.
I shall take the hope you give
Though life itself denies.
Something tells me it is true. . . .
The secret in your eyes!

“IF THOU HAD’ST FAITH”

Softly I kept my tryst with Summer at the gate. . . .
I found a woman gray, austere, who hushed me, bade
me wait.

“Nay!” Summer saith.

“Till thou hast faith,

Till thou hast summoned all thy dreams again—

High daring love and hope and trust in men,

Thou shalt not find again enchanted land.” . . .

Aghast, I gazed at Summer’s lifted hand.

“O Summer, gladly the olden ways I would explore;

Gladly go back to the delirious moon

That beckoned me with each recurring June.

Gladly, O Summer! Make me young again.” . . .

“If thou had’st faith in men”—

Over again she said,

And shook her head.

“If thou could’st suffer as of old, and yearn, and
pray”—

Was it her lifted hand that hid the day?

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

Shall we psycho-analyse the rose,
Tell why its color comes and where it goes;
Learnedly seek to say how dew reclines
On honeysuckle vines?

Shall we psycho-analyse the dawn?
Show how silver and purple, rose and fawn
Never bestowed the ecstasy we caught—
Dupes of our own intoxicated thought?

Come, O moderns! Shall we analyse
Thrusts of the living soul that ever tries
Over and over again to strike her spark
Here in the muddled depths of human dark?

Search as you may, ponder and probe and plan—
Never yet have you compassed the range of man,
Never yet have you touched the mysterious rim—
Blazing border of light that circles him.
Shatter the rose, sunder the roots of trees,

Find if you can the soul of the singing breeze,
Show the lover his vision part by part. . . .
You cannot kill, thank God, his dreaming heart!

AFTERNOON TEA

The trees are having afternoon tea
Out on the amber lawn,
Each at its long shadow table
Welcoming guests with the coming of five o'clock.
They smile and nod and chatter,
Spreading their skirts most graciously,
Gesturing gayly with each wafture of the breeze.
Oh, it is nice to be a tree hostess,
Presiding over smooth, dark tables
And lacquered trays carrying doilies of leafy design.
Such beverage was never brewed by human skill, I fancy!
Late sunshine, filtered through pine needles
And poured with a rich intelligence, that every guest may
 drink.
Beautiful beverage, out of a turquoise bowl
Painted by hand of an unseen Artist.

All the little shrubs and grasses are alert, listening;
Gossip is going on, and there's a flutter of lifted hands.
Now there's a little hurricane of laughter,

And now—"Good-by, my dear. Do come again—soon!"
The trees are having afternoon tea out on the amber lawn.
It is nice to be a tree hostess,
With nothing to worry about,
Nothing to spoil or break—
And Nature standing ready to be waitress whenever the
mistress calls!

VIOLIN

What wounded thing
With broken wing
Has touched thy string
And tuned thy throat?
What seraph note,
What star afloat
Was snared within,
O violin?

What soul was lent
Embodiment?
What fierce lament
Of rage and fire
Hath made each wire
A demon's choir. . . .

What storm at sea
Hath shaken thee
And set me free
And made me brave?

What shouting wave
Its music gave?
O thing of wood. . . .
Hast understood!

PERSONALITY

It is a very subtle and mysterious thing
And takes no cognizance of earthly branding;
We may not find it in the crowned king,
In lords and ladies of imperial standing;
Yet suddenly some swart and humble face
May flash the signal of a royal race.

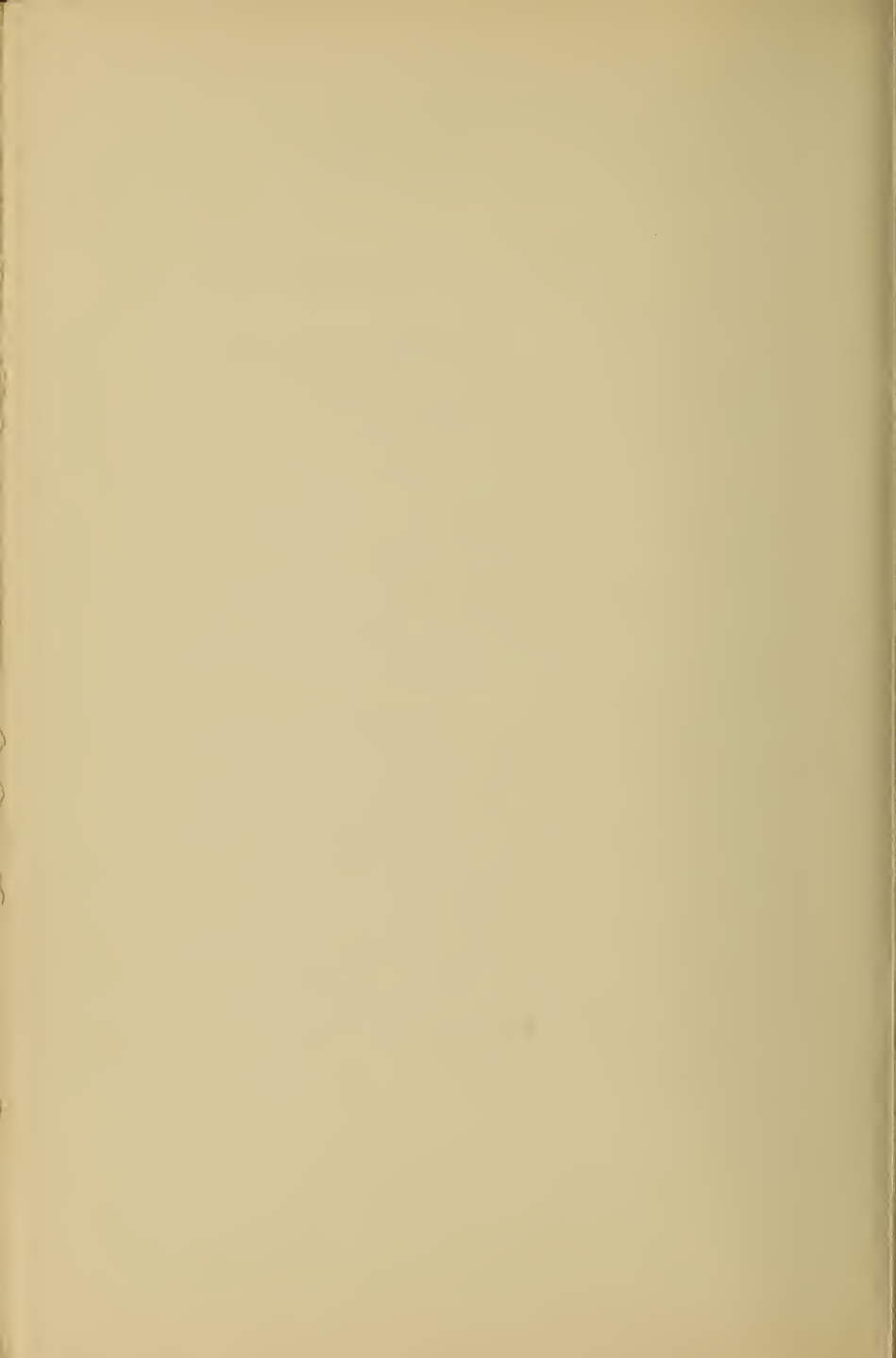
Judge not, and be not judged . . . a goodly plan,
Seeing how few as yet are ripe for testing;
Life still is hewing out the perfect man,
God the Creator worketh on, unresting. . . .
Oh, 'tis a subtle and amazing thing
When from a common mask looks forth a king!

THE INARTICULATE

I visited a studio where ran
Surge upon surge of marble, greatly wrought.
Here leaped the struggle of a living man,
Here was the courage of his spirit caught
And prisoned for the eyes of men to see.
I marvelled that this alabaster white
Could clap such noise of thunder over me;
Could pour such melody upon my sight.
Could tell in forks of fire and rains of gold
What else had been unfashioned and unseen—

Oh, few may tell their souls as sculptors tell!
Oh, few may chisel out for human eyes
The splendors and the mysteries that dwell
Behind our pallid texture of disguise.
We see these human masks that come and go—
These bodies living out their little space—
Once in a life, perhaps, we catch the glow
Of God incarnate in a human face.
Yet all the beauty of the sculptor's throe

And all the agony that artists know
Lie hidden in the hearts of those we meet
In common garments on the common street.



VII

THE BUILDERS

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER ¹

He is known to the sun-white Majesties
Who stand at the gates of dawn;
He is known to the cloud-borne company
Whose souls but late have gone.
Like wind-flung stars through lattice bars
They throng to greet their own,
With voice of flame they sound his name
Who died to us unknown.

He is hailed by the time-crowned brotherhood,
By the Dauntless of Marathon,
By Raymond, Godfrey and Lion Heart,
Whose dreams he carried on.
His name they call through the heavenly hall,
Unheard by earthly ear.

¹ This poem was read by the author over the bier of the Unknown Soldier on the occasion of the Armistice Week Memorial ceremonies at Washington, November 10, 1921. The reading took place in the rotunda of the Capitol, where thousands came to pay tribute to the unknown dead. The poem was written for the American Pen Women's League, their only memorial.

He is claimed by the famed in Arcady
Who knew no title here.

Oh faint was the lamp of Sirius
And dim was the Milky Way.
Oh far was the floor of Paradise
From the soil where the soldier lay.
Oh chill and stark was the crimson dark
Where huddled men lay deep;
His comrades all denied his call—
Long had they lain asleep.

Oh strange how the lamp of Sirius
Drops low to the dazzled eyes:
Oh strange how the steel-red battlefields
Are floors of Paradise.
Oh strange how the ground with never a sound
Swings open, tier on tier,
And standing there in the shining air
Are the friends he cherished here.

They are known to the sun-shod sentinels
Who circle the morning's door.
They are led by a cloud-bright company
Through paths unseen before.
Like blossoms blown their souls have flown

Past war and reeking sod.
In the book unbound their names are found—
They are known in the courts of God!

EDUCATION

You are the answer to the times,
The challenge of this crimson age;
You are the silencer of rage
The end of earth's colossal crimes.

Across the cavern of mischance
Where groping human minds would reach,
O'er fearful gulfs of ignorance
You are the silver bridge of speech.

You span the silence and the dark
Of centuries replete with lore,
Where minds of men may softly hark
To words of sages gone before.

You are the swinging crystal gate
Where Sophocles and Sappho wait;
Where Pericles and Plato bring
Their answer to earth's questioning

And Dante with heroic pen
Bequeaths the sword of Truth to men.

You are the Heaven-climbing stair
Builded above the world's despair
Where souls of men go singing up
To drink the sacramental cup.

You are the good men grapple for,
You shield the song and lift the grail.
Because of you man shall not fail
For you are Conqueror of War!

MASTERY

I claim that man is master who can take
Life's harsh material, whate'er it be,
And from the fabric of misfortune make
A princely garment for the world to see.
I hold that man is master who can stand
Rugged amid the taunts of malice hurled,
Saying, "Behold, the king is in command!"
Until his name be cleared before the world.

I hold him great who laughs in hunger's eye
The while he keeps his compact with the goal
Turning his back on Fortune which denies
The higher quest of his enduring soul.
I say that man is fortunate who bears
The challenge and the torture of the test,
Upon his back a multitude of cares,
The courage of the gods within his breast.

THE DOER

My limbs rejoice in the hurdle;
My thews are strong for the test;
My muscles thrill
To the stinging will
Of the gallant soul's behest.
My feet are made for the running,
I leap in the victor's strength;
Beneath my form
The pygmies swarm
When gleams the goal at length.

I have my hand on the lever;
I work while the dreamer dreams;
My hammer hits
The while he sits
Enthralled by the morning beams.
I give my strength to the building;
I do what he might have done;
While he desires,

My temple spires
Are mounting towards the sun.

I have my hand on the throttle,
My eyes on the signals bright
The speeding track
Looks never back
But forward hails the light.
I have my pulse in the present,
My hope in the future wide;
The mountain wall
Obeys my call
As through its door I glide.
Through granite superstition,
Through fortresses of pride,
Men hew their way
To the light of day
And tunnel ways to ride.
O you who have drawn the pattern,
And you who have dreamed the plan,
Whose was the will
And whose the skill
That cleared the course for man?

I have my hold on the engine,
The rails rush backward fast,
Men see my spark

Through the streaming dark
And heed the Star at last.
Through creeds built high with terror,
Through huge embodied hate,
Man's dauntless mind
A way will find
To conquer fear and Fate.
Give way, O gates of darkness!
Give way, O doors of brass!
Hell's final wall,
You, too, shall fall
And let the Doer pass!

SAMSON HAS THE TEMPLE

This stricken age a falling temple seems,
Doomed to disaster from our earliest dreams.
Our hopes are naught, our visions seem as dust,
Whirled by a judgment august, terrible.
We hear the timbers crashing overhead,
The walls drop plaster and we see the dead
Scattered in sudden silence at our feet.

Like pictures in a dream, a nightmare train—
Terror on terror holds our minds aghast,
Each bitter crime more cruel than the last.
The rafters tremble,—yea, and they must fall,
That we may see the Purpose underneath.
For Truth too long was prostrate on her breast
Whose treachery betrayed the sleeping guest.
Till we behold how Love and Justice rise,
Free as the air, untrammelled as the wind
Life must destroy the temple, built of lies!

THE SCULPTOR SPEAKS

Artist God hath a word for His wayward people,
Artist God hath a word for His blundering race.
Iron clang and brazen shout of the steeple
Hush the treble of silver chimes in space,
Hush and hinder His voice, whose will is hurled,
Beating fine as rain o'er the noisy world.
Sculptor God hath speech that must be told;
Into the heart it falls like driven gold.
"Aeons of time have they spent in the molding of plaster;
Aeons of time have they hammered with chisel and clay,
Shape of the mortal refusing the stamp of the Master,
Pattern of darkness denying the vision of day.
Lo, shall they forfeit their models, who wantonly fling me
Forms out of chaos to fashion again and again,
So shall they shatter a myriad shapes till they bring me
Pattern of purity wrought in the sinews of men."
Sculptor God beholdeth His statues fall
Over and over again from the shaken wall.

Sculptor God cries out to an Earth disgraced;

“How have the wanton hands destroyed my skill!
How hath the human word my Sign effaced,
Over the Master’s wish the mortal will.
Where is the deathless Word I gave for token?
Where have the workmen hidden my proved Design?
God the Maker beholdeth his model broken—
These are deception’s tragedies, not mine!”
Artist God looks forth where their treasures lie—
Flesh and marble and tapestried silk the same!
Dreams that blossomed sweet as an April Sky,
Withered hopes that fell from a withered frame.
“So shall they heap the wreckage pile on pile
Till my world is free from guile.
They who have fashioned sod shall reap the sod—
Dust returneth to dust” saith Sculptor God.
“So shall their idols shatter again and again
Till my Image shine forth in men!”

Sculptor God hath a voice like silver crying;
Sculptor God hath a word like stinging hail;
Over the earth I hear His signals flying—
Keen His call as sound of a piercing gale.
Sculptor God would issue a new command,
Steady the will and guide the fumbling hand.
Sculptor God would utter a stern decree—
“They who would fashion well must follow me.
Sore have they failed who wrought with human rules—

Now shall my artists work with the Spirit's tools."
Sculptor God cries out to His shining sons
Words He uttered to Buddha, Christ and Paul.
Long ago He spoke to His favored ones—
Now the Will of the Sculptor chooseth all.
"Build me afresh my world immense and clean;
Build me a temple worthy an artist race.
Look where the hidden Pattern shines serene,
Shape me anew my ancient dwelling place."

BEHOLD THE BUILDERS!

First, the foundation, with its depth of toil,
Its dogged clamor, lift of earth and stone;
Its delving deep and deeper into soil
That Heaven-seeking man shall find his own.

The olden sacrifice is lived again—
Death and starvation, should the builder shirk!
But these are toil-defying gods of men
And come in cold December dawn to work.

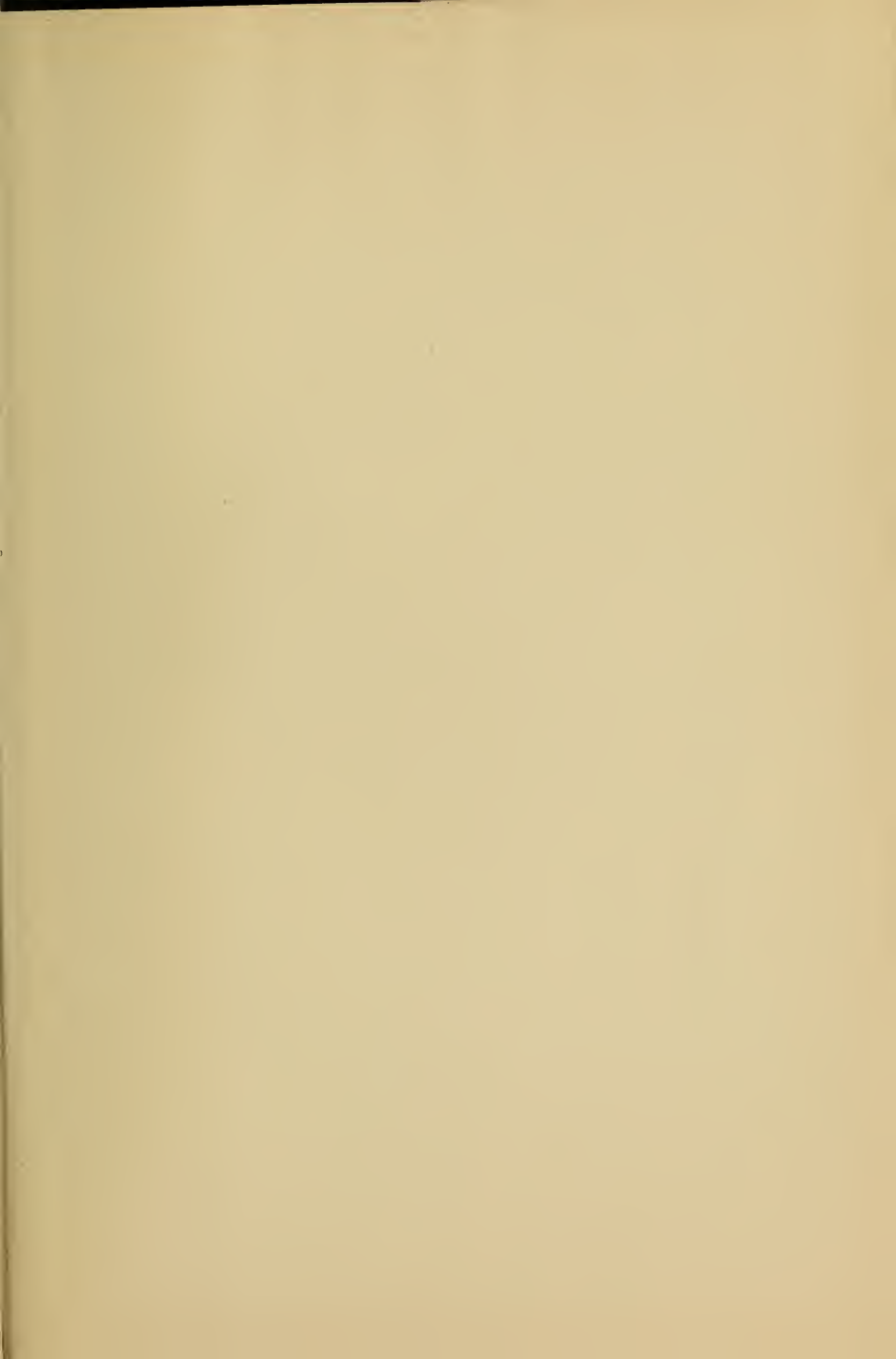
I start from sleep to hear their voices call;
Their task a Juggernaut of terror seems;
The slate-blue morn is stiff upon the wall,
And thankfully I drop again to dreams.

All day I watch them from my window pane;
I would my sinews held such fibered steel!
Could I but work as they in sleet and rain,
My arm such hidden majesty reveal!

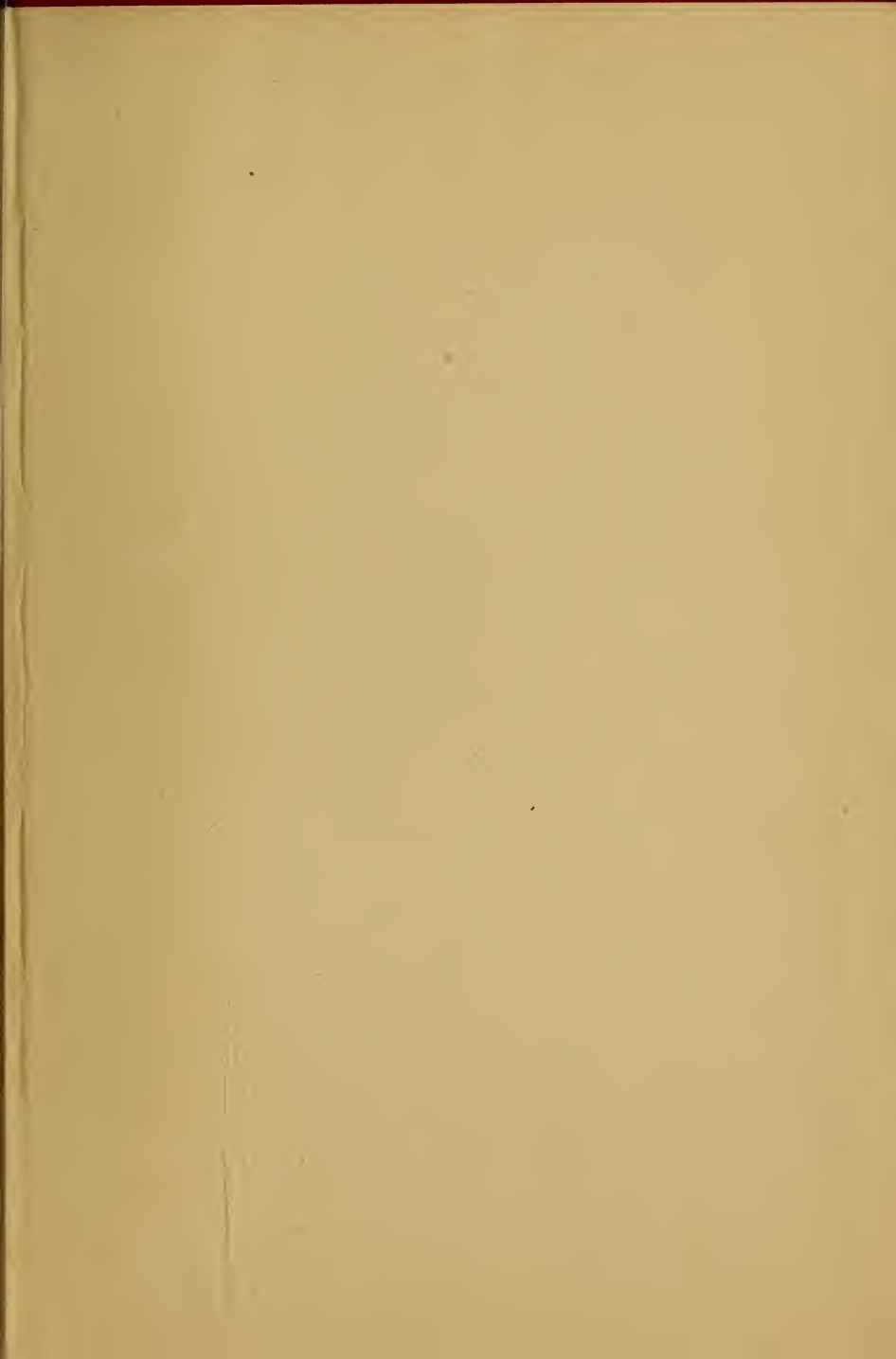
With all my seeking after lovely things—
My fire, my books, my roses in a bowl—
I wonder if their giant labor brings
A vaster sense of beauty to the soul?

I wonder if the mountain task we shun
While seeking solace for the troubled mind,
Would lift our spirit closer to the sun,
And give to us the strength we could not find?

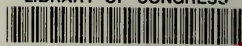
Behold the builders! Greatly do they spend
And greatly do they take of Titan force.
They swing to mighty rhythms without end;
We pray to God—they meet Him at the source!







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